



By the King.

A Proclamation for preuenting the decayes of Churches and Chappels for the time to come.



He Kings most Excellent MAIESTIE hauing of late taken speciall notice of the generall decayes and ruines of Parish Churches and Chappels in many parts of this Kingdome, and that by Law the same ought to bee repaired and maintained from time to time, at the proper charge of the Inhabitants and occupiers of Lands within those Parishes and Chappeltries respectiue, who being altogether carelesse of their dueties therein, haue in many places wilfully neglected the same, when with a little charge seasonably bestowed in time, they might easily preuent those great ruines, which afterwards grow moze heavy to be supported by their owne defaults, and sometimes those Churches and Chappels are by them purposely suffered to run into

such extreame ruine and decay out of hope to obtaine some generall Collection, whereby to spare themselves, and to get the worke, which they are bound to doe by law, to bee done by the common purse of others, such Collections hauing been of late yeeres moze frequently granted then heretofore.

His Maiestie therefore taking this matter into his Princely consideration, and holding it a great dishonour to our Christian profession, that the consecrated places of Gods worship and Diuine Service are no better looked vnto, doth by this his Proclamation straitly charge & command all Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and others to whom it may appertaine, That they take speciall care, each of them within his owne limits and Jurisdiction, that this point of keeping and vpholding the Churches and Chappels from time to time, in good, decent, and substantiall repaire, bee exactly and duely performed, and therein not to rely vpon the Churchwardens presentments, who to saue themselves and their neighbours from charge, will easily omit to make knowen the decayes of their Churches and their owne defaults, but either by themselves in person, or by their Officials, or other persons of worth and trust, to take view and suruey of

8934



the Churches and Chappels within their severall Jurisdictions, and where they find ought amisse, to cause the same to be speedily and carefully amended, and to limit and appoint set dayes for the doing thereof, that no needfull worke be deferred too long, and to vse the power of the Ecclesiasticall Courts for putting the same in due execution. Willing and requiring also all His Maiesties Judges of the Common Law, to be very carefull and wary, that in these cases which concerne the repaire of Churches & Chappels according to this His Maiesties Princely care, and Royall commandement, the good worke undertaken in the Ecclesiasticall Courts bee not interrupted, by their too easie granting of Prohibitions, which, as with other cases, so especially in this, would not be granted, but vpon weighty and great cause, and vpon strict and due examination.

And to take away from the said Inhabitants and Land-holders of Parishes, the hope which they haue heretofore had to relieue themselves by publique Collections, as also to prevent the causelesse burthening of His louing Subjects, not lyable by the Law to the sayd reparations, His Maiesty hereby doeth further charge and command the Lord Keeper of the great Seale of England, that from hencefoorth no Letters Patents be granted, nor suffered to passe the Seale for any Collection for the repayring or new building of any Churches or Chappels, or the Steeples of the same, excepting onely in case of casualty by fire, or extraordinary violence of Tempest, whereby the sayd Churches, Chappels, or Steeples are suddenly, without the Parishioners default, so greatly decayed, as the Inhabitants and Land-holders are not able without helpe of others, to repayre or new build the same.

All which His Maiesty doth will and command to be from hencefoorth duely and strictly obserued, aswel by the said Lord Keeper for his part, as by the said Archbishops, Bishops, Judges, and others for their parts, as they tender His Maiesties good pleasure and Royall Commandement, that the great inconuenience, and dishonour of suffering the houses of Gods worship and seruice, to runne into ruine and decay amongst vs, may bee hereafter carefully prevented.

Giuen at His Maiesties Honour of Hampton Court, the eleuenth day of October, in the fift yeere of His Reigne, of Great Britaine, France, and Ireland.

God saue the King.



Imprinted at London by Bonham Norton and Iohn Bill, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie.

M.DC. XXIX.